Blindness Education, Screening, & Treatment Program Highlights

A balanced diet, annual eye exam, and following a treatment plan, if necessary, can help save your vision.

Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services

Fiscal Year 2007 Accomplishments

Subcontracts with Federally Qualified Health Centers provide comprehensive eye screening and referral for treatment for clients without financial means. The numbers below reflect activity reported to date:

- 342 clients screened,
- 49 referred to treatment for diabetic retinopathy,
- 32 referred to treatment for cataracts,
- 43 referred to treatment for glaucoma, and
- 5 referred to treatment for macular degeneration.

In addition, a Memorandum of Agreement with the Department of Social Services, Rehabilitation Services for the Blind, provides for eye screening, diagnosis, and treatment for individuals who are financially eligible. To date 33 individuals have received assistance. 26 were from a rural area and the other 7 lived in an urban setting. Services included eye examinations, Fundus photographs, visual field testing, anesthesia, glaucoma medications, hospitalization, cataract surgery, ocular injections, and Vitrectomy.

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Computers and Your Eyes

According to the Prevent Blindness America organization, computer screens do not damage the eye because they produce little or no harmful radiation. If radiation is released it is at a level that is lower than levels that can cause damage.

However, computer screens can cause eyestrain. Symptoms include sore or irritated eyes and difficulty focusing. Eyestrain can also be caused by a need for glasses or a change in prescription eye glasses. You can reduce or prevent eyestrain by making changes to your computer workspace or by visiting your eye doctor.

Prevent Blindness America has several tips to make your workspace more comfortable and reduce eyestrain:

- Be sure your screen is 20 to 26 inches away from your eyes and is a little below eye level.
- Use a document holder next to your computer screen. Place the holder close enough so that you do not swing your head back and forth or have to constantly change your eye focus.
- Adjust lighting to lower glare and harsh reflections. Glare filters over the computer screen can also help.
- Use an adjustable chair.
- Choose screens that tilt and swivel. An adjustable keyboard is also helpful.

For more tips on how to protect your eyes, visit: www.preventblindness.org

A Success Story

Beverly, 48 years old, lives in a small, rural Missouri town, supports her family with an income of less than $900 per month, does not have insurance, has diabetes, and has noticed progressive vision impairment for five years. Due to financial constraints and lack of insurance, Beverly, who is at high risk for eye disease, is unable to have the recommended annual eye exam. Through the support of the Blindness Fund, and the agreement with Rehabilitation Services for the Blind (RSB), Beverly was eligible for assistance through RSB's Prevention of Blindness Program, received an eye examination, was diagnosed with a dense cataract in one eye, and has had the cataract surgically removed. Now Beverly is able to continue to work and support her family.

The contract fee offices asking the question about donating to the Blindness Fund supports efforts to help people like Beverly. Thank you.